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ABSTRACT

An overview of language instruction on the national level and specifically in Nevada during the late 1950's and the early 1960's reveals five major factors which contributed to the changing trends. The author discusses: (1) the new understanding of the nature of language, (2) changing philosophies and objectives, (3) modern foreign language and the national interest, (4) new methods and materials, (5) extended sequences in curriculum design. Graphs, tables, and lists of critical languages taught in public schools supplement the basic discussion. A section on the position of classical languages and a selected bibliography are included. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (RL)

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CURRICULUM TRENDS
in
FOREIGN LANGUAGES

by

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FL 001 846

CURRICULUM TRENDS IN MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

The original purpose of the secondary school in the United States was to teach foreign languages. Through the evolution of the American High School this emphasis became less and less predominant until in 1954-55 only one student in five studied a foreign language during his secondary school years.[1] Since foreign languages today are the basis for much discussion and publicity, it may prove of benefit to examine what changes have taken place in the field during the past few years and to discuss the future of these trends. Five main areas can be identified among the many that are causing a sweeping change in modern foreign language study - perhaps one of the most rapid and easily discernible trends in American Education today.

I. A new realization of the nature of language and language learning.

II. New philosophies and objectives.

III. The awareness of the relationship between foreign languages and national survival and the realization that we are not teaching the right languages.

IV. New teaching aids, methods, and materials.

V. Extended sequences of study, including the elementary school.

Let us briefly examine each of these in the United States as a whole, then in Nevada in particular. These apply only to the modern foreign languages, classical languages will be discussed briefly later on.

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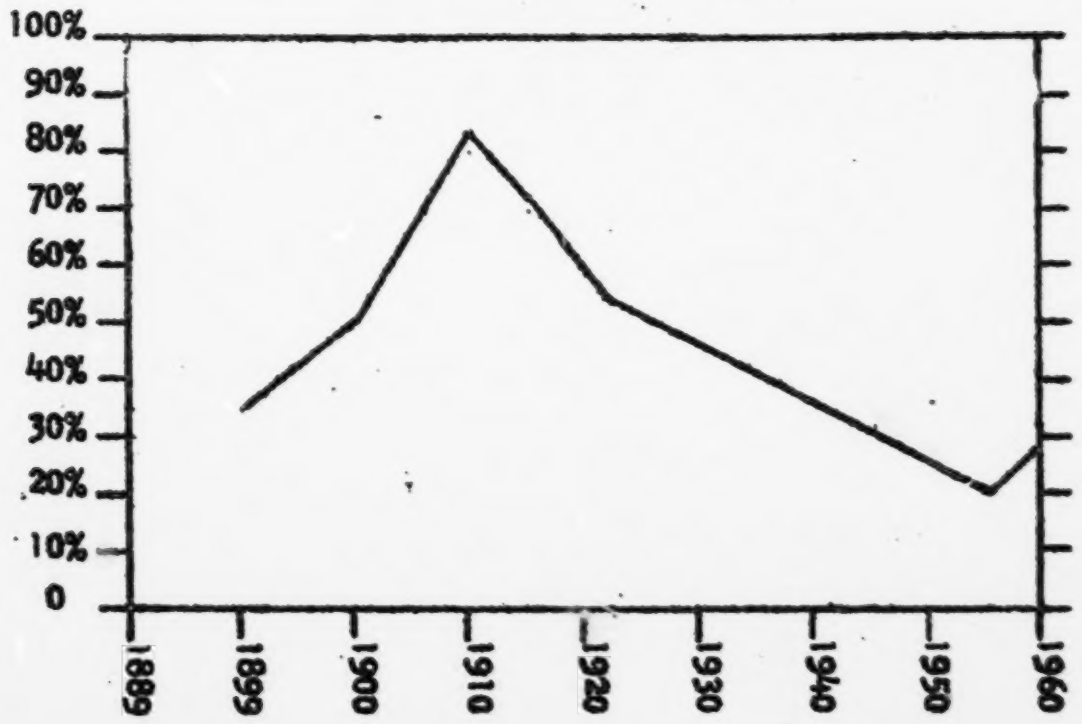
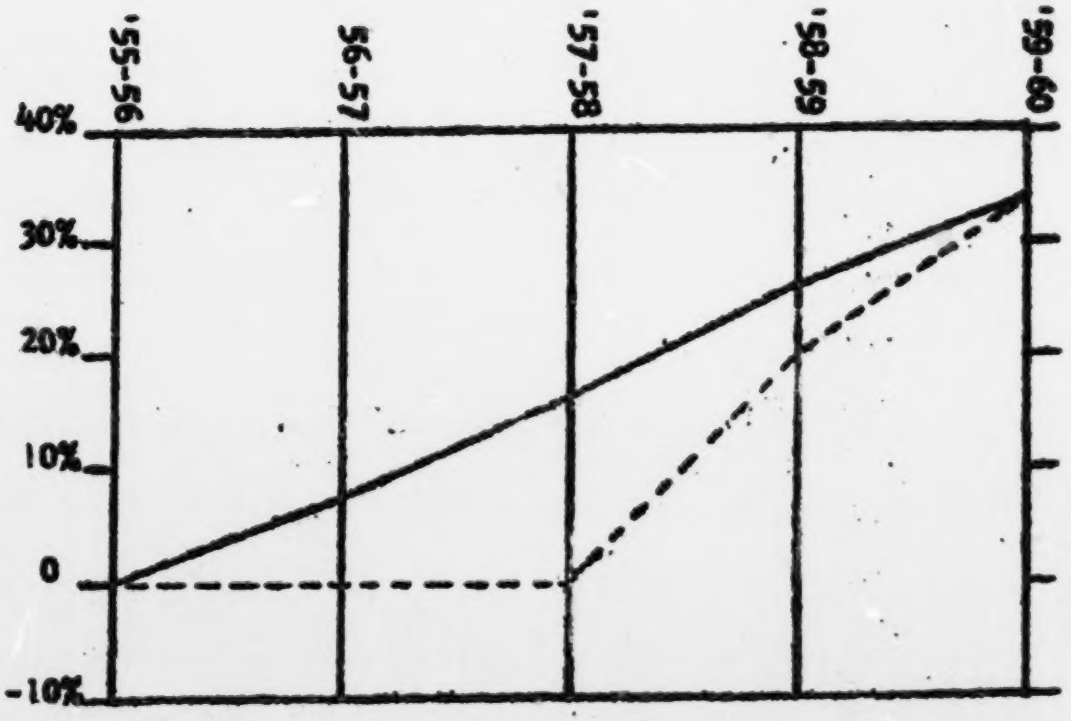
[1]E. A. Krug, The Secondary School Curriculum (New York: Harper, 1960.) Chapter 10, "Foreign Languages, Classical and Modern."

GRAPH I
PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ENROLLED
IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES, 1889-1960



GRAPH II



I. A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE

Instruction in the modern foreign languages has been predicated on the methods and philosophies of the Latin Grammar School. Thus, languages for years has been taught as a series of grammatical rules and verb paradigms. Modern linguists view language as a means of communication rather than a fossilized skeleton to be grammatically dissected on the blackboard. We are attempting to teach a language, not about a language.

Language, as communication, is taught orally in life situations and the structure of a language is unconsciously learned by the child before the age of six. No language is "harder" than another to the child. It is only later that we teach him the names of the words he utters and understands - but he can communicate long before this. The modern methods of teaching a foreign language attempt to imitate the natural process. This understanding has led to a change in our basic philosophy and objectives.

One of the most common misconceptions about the nature of language is that language is writing, or that writing is language. Writing is NOT language. In many cases the two are not even remotely related. Writing is merely a system of symbols, often archaic and arbitrarily selected, chosen to represent sounds or ideas.

The widespread misconception is best illustrated by the fact that when an American makes the statement, "I speak Japanese" he is

often regarded with astonishment and awe befitting a verbal genius. Even assurances that the Japanese language is relatively simple fail to dispell this aura of awe. Yet, as a spoken language, Japanese is not difficult - the difficulty lies in the fact that we confuse the written language with the spoken tongue.

Language is the most basic tool of the human race. It separates us from all other creatures and molds our lives and our society. Language is a living, changing, dynamic thing that includes gestures, taboos, thought, and prejudices in addition to the spoken sounds and writing.

II. CHANGING PHILOSOPHIES AND OBJECTIVES

The foundation of an area of the curriculum is its philosophy and objectives. The change that has taken place in foreign language instruction is most graphically illustrated by a study of statements of goals. A good example of this is in Nevada itself. The 1934 Course of Study for Foreign Languages contains the statement that, the aim of studying French is, "To develop ability to <u>read</u> French, together with such knowledge of grammar, pronunciation, and understanding of the spoken word as may be necessary to facilitate this ability.[2]

This statement is in direct conflict with more modern concepts. A new Course of Study for Modern Foreign Languages is currently being

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[2]State of Nevada, Department of Education. <u>High School Course of Study</u>, Book III, Foreign Languages. (Carson City; State Dept. of Education, 1934). p. 9.

written. At a meeting in Las Vegas, April 7 and 8, 1961, twenty-one foreign language teachers and school administrators developed the following objectives of modern foreign language study.

MAIN LINGUISTIC OBJECTIVES[3]

Since the ability to communicate is the heart of modern foreign language study, initial emphasis should be on learning to communicate orally.

Learning a language is a four-fold process; hearing, speaking, reading, and writing. These four skills are closely related and largely interdependent. Speech cannot come without hearing while reading and writing are linked by the common system of representing the written word. All are governed by the grammatical concepts of the language itself.

1. Hearing: The student should understand the foreign language as it is spoken by native speakers in situations similar to his own experience.

2. Speaking: The student should, within his experience, develop fluency and efficiency in speaking the foreign language correctly.

3. Reading: The student should develop the ability to read withoutconscious translation, anything within the range of what the student has learned to understand and to say.

4. Writing: The student should be able to communicate in writing his thoughts within the range of his vocabulary.

III. MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND NATIONAL INTERESTS

The United States has come to realize that a knowledge of modern foreign languages is inexorably tied to our national survival. True,

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[3]Phillip D. Smith. Report of the Course of Study Meeting on Modern Foreign Languages. (Carson City: State Dept. of Education, Title III Division, 1961.) p. 5.

English is today the most widely spoken language on the surface of the earth, in a geographical sense. However, we must not develop the philosophy that other nations should learn English. Often they are too busy trying to develop a single national language and to achieve literacy. It is as easy for a Indonesian to learn Russian or Chinese as it is for him to learn English.[4]

We do not simply need translators or interpreters on a vast scale. Our needs are for people in other areas who can communicate their skills and knowledge to the native. A computer can do a fair job of translation but it can never shake hands in Urdu.

We have largely confined the languages that we teach in our schools to those of Western Europe. This position is becoming more untenable each year and we are slowly beginning to teach languages other than Latin, German, French, Italian, and Spanish. Russian is coming to the fore while far-sighted schools are adding other languages. A list of foreign languages taught in our secondary schools is printed on the following page.

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[4]For more detailed reading see: William R. Parker. The National Interest and Foreign Languages. Dept. State Publication 6389, International Organization and Conference Series IV, UNESCO 30. (Washington, D.C., G.P.O., 1957.) Dr. Parker is a Professor of English at Indiana University.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES TAUGHT IN UNITED STATES

PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1959-60[5]

Language**	Number os States Where Taught
Arabic	1
Chinese	1*
Czech	2
English (as a foreign language)	1
French	51***
German	50
Greek, Ancient	4
Greek, Modern	1
Hawaiian	1
Hebrew, Ancient & Modern	7
Italian	13
Japanese	1*
Latin	51
Norwegian	4
Polish	4
Portuguese	3
Russian	38
Spanish	51
Swedish	2

*Will be taught in at least one other state in 1961-62.
**In addition, Serbian is taught at the elementary school level in one state.
***Includes the District of Columbia

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[5] J. Wesley Childers. Foreign Language Offerings and Enrollments in Public Secondary Schools, Fall 1959. (New York: M.L.A., 1961.)

In 1959 the American Council of Learned Societies, under a contract with the United States Office of Education, established a list of languages that are and will be of vital importance to the United States. These were divided into three catagories of importance.

French, German, Italian, and Spanish are not included. These languages are both important and needed but instruction in them is available on a large scale at present. The "critical" or Major Neglected Languages include:

The first six critical languages are:

1. Arabic (in its chief dialects, and with the dialect of modern standard Arabic stressed).
2. Chinese (in its chief dialects, with Mandarin given highest priority).
3. Hindi-Urdu (principal language of India and Pakistan; Hindi and Urdu differ only in their writing systems and literary vocabulary).
4. Japanese.
5. Portuguese (national language of Portugal and Brazil).
6. Russian.

The 18 critical languages in the second group are:

Bengali (India; Pakistan)
Burmese (Burma)
Finnish (Finland)
Hebrew (modern) (Israel)
Hungarian (Hungary)
Indonesian-Malay (Indonesia)
Khalkha (Outer Mongolia)
Korean (Korea)
Marathi (India)
Persian (Iran; Afghanistan)
Polish (Poland)
Serbo- Croatian (Yougoslavia)
Singhalese (Ceylon)
Swahili (East Africa)
Tamil (Ceylon; India)
Telugu (India)
Thai (Thailand)
Turkish

The remaining languages requiring special attention are:

Afrikaans
Albanian
Amharic
Armenian
Assamese
Azerbaijani
Berber languages
Bulgarian
Byelorussian
Cambodian
Czech
Danish
Dutch
Estonian
Ewe
Greek (modern)
Gujerati
Hausa
Ibo
Icelandic
Ilocano
Javanese
Kannada
Kashmiri
Kasak
Kazan-Turkic
Kpelle
Kurdish
Laotian
Lettish
Lithuanian
Madurese
Malagasy
Malayalam
Mongo
Mossi
Nepali
Norwegian
Oriya
Panjabi
Pashto
Quechua
Rajasthani
Romanian
Shona
Sindhi
Slovak
Slovene
Sundanese
Swedish
Tagalog
Tibetan
Tigrinya
Twi
Ukrainian
uzbek
Vietnamese
Visayan
Yoruba

NUMBER OF SPEAKERS OF THE WORLD'S MAJOR LANGUAGES

Chinese (all dialects)	500,000,000 to 650,000,000
English	250,000,000
Hindi-Urdu	160,000,000
Russian (including Byelorussian and Ukrainian)	150,000,000
Spanish	120,000,000
German	100,000,000
Japanese	100,000,000
French	80,000,000
Indonesian	80,000,000
Portuguese	60,000,000
Bengali	60,000,000
Italian	60,000,000
Arabic	50,000,000
All other languages	830,000,000

Figures taken from Language for Everybody by Dr. Mario Pei. Devin-Adair Co., 1956.

THE WORLD'S 106 LANGUAGES HAVING THE LARGEST SPEAKING POPULATIONS

OVER 50 MILLION

Chinese (all dialects)
English
Hindustani (Hindi & Urdu)
Spanish
Russian
German
Japanese
Indonesian (Malay)
French
Bengali
Italian
Portuguese
Arabic

40-50 MILLION

Ukrainian

30-40 MILLION

Bihari (India)
Telugu (India)

25-30 MILLION

Polish
Korean
Tamil (India)
Marathi (India)

20-25 MILLION

Turkish
Javanese
Vietnamese (Annamese)
Punjabi (India)

15-20 MILLION

Dutch (including Flemish and Afrikaans)
Rumanian
Gujarati (India)
Rajasthani (India)

10-15 MILLION

Kanarese (India)
Malayalam (India)
Oriya (India)
Burmese
Persian (Iranian)
Servo-Croatian
Czech
Hungarian (Magyar
Hausa (West Africa)
Lahnda (India)

5-10 MILLION

Greek
Tibetan
Swedish
Swahili (East Africa)
Bulgarian
Bylorussian (White Russian)
Yiddish
Berber
Galla (Ethiopia)
Amharic (Ethiopia)
Sundanese (Indonesia)
Catalan
Nepali (India)
Pushtu (Afghanistan)
Singhalese (Ceylon)
Bisaya (Philippines)

1-5 MILLION

Kurdish (Iran, Iraq, Turkey)
Azerbaijani (USSR Urab)
Uzbek (USSR)
Mossi (West Africa)
Fula (Africa)
Ruanda (Africa)
Quichua (South America)
Finnish
Armenian
Luba (Africa)
Frisian (North Sea Coast)
Tagalog (Philippines)
Khmer (Cambodia)
Danish
Mandingo (Africa)
Kherwari (India)
Slovak
Norwegian
Sindhi (India)
Pahari (India)
Yoruba (Africa)
Ibo (Africa)
Zulu (South Africa)
Fanti (Africa)
Xhosa (South Africa)
Somali (East Africa)
Lithuanian
Assamese (India)
Malagasy (Madagascar)
Madurese (Indonesia)
Ilocano (Philippines)
Hebrew (Israel)
Umbundu (Africa)
Slovene (Yugoslavia)
Guarani (South America)
Aymara (South America)
Lettish (Latvia)
Albanian
Bicol (Philippines)
Mordvin (USSR)
Gondi (India)
Welsh
Romansh, including Friulian (Switzerland, northeast Italy)
Georgian (Caucasus-Soviet Union)
Estonian
Breton (northwest France)
Basque
Balinese (Indonesia)
Kashmiri (India)
Sardinian
Irish and Scots Gaelic
Esperanto

NUMBER OF EXISTING SPOKEN LANGUAGES IN EACH LANGUAGE FAMILY

Indo-European	132
Semito-Hamitic	46
Ural-Altaic	666
Japanese-Korean	2
Sino-Tibetan	115
Malayo-Polynesian	263
Dravidian	26
Sudanese-Guinean	435
Bantu	83
Hottentot-Bushman	6
American Indian (351 in North America; 96 in Mexico and Central America; 783 in Antilles and South America)	1230
Eskimo-Aleut	24
Caucasian	26
Near-Eastern or Asianic	29
Hyperborean or Paleo-Asiatic	12
Burushaski	1
Andamanese	12
La-Ti	1
Austroasiatic (Mon-Khmer, Annamese, Munda)	52
Papuan	132
Australian	96
Tasmanian	5
Ibero-Basque	2
TOTAL	2796

NUMERICAL DISTRIBUTION OF WORLD POPULATION AMONG LANGUAGE FAMILIES

	Millions of Speakers
Indo-European	1300
Sino-Tibetan	600
Japanese-Korean	130
African Negro (including Bantu, Sudano-Guinean, Hottentot-Bushman)	130
Semito-Hamitic	100
Dravidian	100
Malayo-Polynesian	100
Ural-Altaic	90
Annamese, Mon-Khmer, Munda	30
American Indian	15
Caucasian	2
Basque	1
Others	2
TOTAL	2600

NUMERICAL DISTRIBUTION OF INDO-EUROPEAN SPEAKERS

	Millions of Speakers
Germanic	380
Romance	340
Indo-Iranian	310
Balto-Slavic	250
Greek	10
Celtic	4
Armenian	4
Albanian	2
TOTAL	1300

The launching of the first earth satellite by the Russians in October of 1957 electrified our nation. One of the immediate results was Public Law 864, The National Defense Education Act. To most persons this brings to mind the fields of science and mathematics. It is not widely known that modern foreign languages receive more emphasis in the Act than the other two fields.

Title III of the N.D.E.A. provides for State Supervisors and related services and matching funds for the acquisition of equipment. An indication of success is the increasing number of states with Foreign Language Supervisors, from three in 1958 to thirty eight in 1961. Language laboratories have increased from a few in 1958 to well over 2,000 by the fall of 1960.

Title VI-A of the Act provides for aid to Universities. Under this program the Foreign Language Institutes are included. They have increased from five in 1959 to sixty-seven in 1961. The University of Nevada is currently training forty-seven teachers of French and Spanish for eight weeks under an N.D.E.A. grant of approximately $83,000.00. The Institutes are designed to increase teacher competency and demonstrate new methods and materials.

One quarter of all modern language teachers in Nevada will have received this training by September of 1961. The influences on our curriculum are already felt.

Forty-seven universities have been granted funds and are training teachers of the "critical" languages. One hundred and twenty fellowships are available for doctoral candidates in foreign languages.

Title VI-B provides funds for research into language and language learning. Hundreds of contracts have been let to projects ranging from X-Ray motion pictures of certain Arabic sounds to the $2,000,000.00 Audio-Lingual Materials Project that is writing new teaching materials in five languages.

Title VII is concerned with new educational media. It is significant that the first project of this division to be released is a motion picture entitled To Speak with Friends. The picture shows new media used to teach modern foreign languages, especially educational television.

IV. NEW METHODS AND MATERIALS

The emphasis on language as communication has led to a new approach, the aural-oral or, more properly, Audio-Lingual. The target language is taught by dialogs and drills designed around situations familiar to the experience of the learner. The language is taught in its spoken form. The written language is not presented until the student has mastered the word orally. The order of presentation is hearing, speaking, reading, and writing.

This approach requires that the teacher be fluent in the language. Unfortunately, in many cases, this situation does not exist. The results of this requirement are the N.D.E.A. Institutes, changes in certification regulations, and a change in the college curriculum and graduation requirements.

New teaching aids are changing curriculum, especially the language laboratory. This device requires a special room, new methods, and often a change in scheduling. Foreign language teaching is speeded up and strengthened with this tool. R. F. Mallina, formerly of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, claims an increase in learning efficiency of at least fifty percent.[6]

The latest secondary text books for beginning students do not contain a single rule of grammar nor a single grammatical term.

V. EXTENDED SEQUENCES

"I submit that the study of a language for two years, even two languages for two years each, is a waste of time."[7]

James B. Conant.

The vast majority of foreign language teachers agree, to a degree, with Dr. Conant's statement. With the realization that language proficiency is an acquired set of skills, a longer sequence of study has become the desired goal. Both the N.E.A. and the Modern Language Association of America have designed a ten-year program (3-12) and a six-year program (7-12).[8]

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[6] R. F. Mallina. Costs and Efficiency of the Language Laboratory. (New York: Magnetic Recording Industries, 1959.) p.8.

[7] James B. Conant "Education," Time, January 5, 1959. p. 68.

[8] N.E.A. Modern Foreign Languages and the Academically Talented Student. (Washington, D.C.: N.E.A., 1960.) pp. 40-56.

Foreign Languages in the Elementary School (FLES) is now a growing reality. In 1959 there were over 1,200,000 elementary students studying foreign languages.[9]

The Nevada Foreign Language Course of Study Committee has adopted this trend and the Course of Study in this area will be written in five levels, designed for a six-year sequence. The philosophy of this work is evident in their statement on sequence.

SEQUENCES OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY[10]

> The study of a foreign language is the acquisition of a definite set of skills. These skills require time to achieve. It is recognized that the study of a foreign language should be maintained as long as the interest, ability, and needs of a student permit.
>
> In this light the study of a foreign language for three school years in considered minimal, with the desired aim a possible sequence of from four to six years for able students. Accordingly, the course outlines which follow are designed to permit a school to institute a flexible but sustained sequence of foreign language study.

CURRICULUM CHANGES IN NEVADA

Now let us examine the effect of some of these on Nevada, in the same order of their past discussion.

I. Nature of Language and II. Objectives are changing concepts. This change is reflected in the Course of Study being written now, portions of which have been quoted in the preceding text. Target date for completion of this work is the summer of 1962.

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[9]Marjorie Breunig. Foreign Languages in the Elementary Schools of the United States, 1959-60. (New York: M.L.A., 1961.) p. 2.

[10]Smith, op. cit., p. 7.

III. National Interests: There is a desire to add Russian to the curriculum in Clark County. The lack of a qualified teacher is the only thing that preclude instruction in Russian during the 1959-60 school year.

The Course of Study will have a special outline to permit instruction in any of the Major Neglected Languages.

IV. New Methods and Aids: METHODS. Twenty-four of the seventy-five foreign language teachers in Nevada this past year will have received instruction in the Audio-Lingual method by September. It will be widely used, probably correlated with existing texts and materials. All beginning modern language classes at Reno High School this coming school year will use the Audio-Lingual Materials (published by Harcourt, Brace, and World).

AIDS. When School opened in September of 1960 there were two new language laboratories, the first in the Nevada Public Schools. By September of 1961 there will be nine, of thirty-five, high schools equipped with language laboratories, one quarter of the total. $42,000.00 was approved for equipment and materials under Title III of the N.D.E.A. during the past fiscal year on modern foreign language instruction in Nevada. It is expected that a similar amount will be spent this year. The language laboratories accounted for the bulk of this money but a large amount of other equipment was purchased.

V. Extended Sequences: The move to longer sequences of study is in two directions from the traditional Level I and Level II. The first is upward to Level III and eventually to Level IV, this is

Illustrated below:

	1956-57	1957-58	1958-59	1959-60	1960-61	
Level III	0	1	1	4	6	No. of Schools
Level IV	0	0	0	0	1	No. of Schools

Note: Reno High School will have French IV next year. Western High School will have Spanish III, French III, and German III.

The progression is also beginning to proceed downward from Level I in Grade 9. Foreign language instruction below Grade 9 in Nevada Public Schools are:

School	Language	Grades
Ely Grade School	Spanish	6-7-8
John C. Fremont Jr. H.S.	Spanish	8
Roy Martin Jr. H.S.	French & Spanish	8
Hyde Park Jr. H.S.	Spanish	8
Henderson Jr. H.S.	Spanish	8

Next year (1961-62) the following schools will be added to the list.

Central Jr. H.S.	Spanish-French Latin	8
Billinghurst Jr. H.S.	" "	8
Trainor Jr. H.S.	" "	8
E. O. Vaughn Jr. H.S.	" "	8

A plan to institute modern foreign language instruction in Grade 7 has been adopted by the Board of School Trustees, Elko County. This will probably not take effect for another year.

The expansion has also begun to move laterally. More secondary schools are adding a foreign language, from 83.4% in 1959 to 85.7% in 1960. This percentage will continue to rise.

More schools are adding languages not formerly taught - German to Las Vegas H.S., both German and French to White Pine, French to Elko, Wells, Carson City, and Tonopah. Latin, once second to Spanish, is now being hard pressed by French. Fall 1960 enrollments showed 700 Latin students and 696 French. Russian only awaits a qualified teacher.

CONCLUSION

Modern foreign language enrollments in Nevada increased 33.6% in 1960 over 1938 enrollments.[11] In 1956-1960 the total U. S. enrollments in all foreign languages increased from 21.1% to 27% of the total school population in Grade 9 through 12.[12] This upswing of foreign language enrollments may be expected to continue.

The effect of the N.D.E.A., particularly in Nevada where we were two years late getting started, cannot yet be accurately evaluated. That it will be great is clear but only time will tell how much impact it has made.

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[11]Philip D. Smith, "Foreign Language Trends in Nevada," Nevada Education Bulletin, November 1960. pp. 8-12.

[12]Childers, Op. cit., p. 11.

THE CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

The great classical languages have been losing ground in the curriculum for many years. Ancient Greek is almost gone by the 1959-60 school year. Both it an Hebrew are giving way to Modern Greek and Modern Hebrew, both "critical" languages.

Latin is still strong but is also beginning to weaken, being superseded in Nevada by French. The age old reasons given for the study of Latin are being refuted. Among these are:

1. Latin trains the mind - So does mathematics, which is most useful.

2. Latin is needed to study medicine and law. This is no longer true. Medical schools are dropping the Latin requirement. Prescriptions are now written in "tradenames." Legal phraseology has little relationship to Classical Latin and can be acquired without formal study of the language.

3. Latin helps you to learn the Romance Languages. Not with the new methods. The grammar approach fostered by Latin would be difficult to break away from. In fact, Latin is now recommended as a second foreign language, not a first, and it should not interrupt the six-year sequence.[13]

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[13]Frederick D. Eddy, ed. The Language Learner. Reports of the 1959 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. (Washington, D.C., Georgetown University, 1959.)

4. Latin helps English. Undoubtedly true, but a concentrated English course on Latin and Greek derivities would accomplish much the same task in a shorter time than two years of Latin.

Latin does have values, particularly for the person interested in the science of language structure. It has a great literature and history; however, it no longer serves as a vehicle for communication. It is safe to predict that Latin will slowly lose its place in the secondary curriculum to the more neglected spoken languages such as Arabic and Chinese.

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